

BELIEVING BIBLE STUDY AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL

November 16, 2004 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The following is an excerpt from the fourth edition of *The King James Version Defended* by Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in modern textual criticism from Harvard. Dr. Hills did not buy into the naturalistic principles of textual criticism. Instead, he established his textual principles upon the Bible itself and proceeded from a foundation of faith. It is an urgent matter that this man's voice be heard today in fundamentalist colleges and seminaries, but the "King James Only" position (as it has been commonly labeled by its enemies) has been so ridiculed and maligned today that men such as Edward Hills and John Burgon do not receive a fair hearing.

BELIEVING BIBLE STUDY ON THE GRADUATE LEVEL: CHRIST AND GRAMMAR

By Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, fourth edition, 1984, chapter 4

We must make God and Jesus Christ His Son the starting point of all our thinking. But how can we do this on the graduate level at a theological seminary or a university? How can we know for example, whether the King James Version is a correct translation or not? Don't we have to rely on dictionaries, such as Brown-Driver-Briggs, Thayer, Kittel, and Liddel-Scott? And for grammar don't we have to go to the great authorities in this field, such as Genenius, Bauer, and Blass-Debrunner? And how, really, do we know that the Textus Receptus is a trustworthy reproduction of the majority New Testament text? For our knowledge of the New Testament manuscripts are we not obliged to depend almost entirely on the writings of experts, such as Gregory, Kenyon, Colwell, Metzger, and Aland? When we study the Bible on the graduate level, therefore, how can we begin with God? Must we not rather begin with men? With the information provided by scholars, most of whom are unbelievers?

Questions like these cause many conservative seminary students to panic and become virtual unbelievers in their biblical studies. In order, therefore, to prevent such catastrophes, we must always emphasize the Christian starting point that all our thinking ought to have. If we are Christians, then we must begin our thinking not with the assertions of unbelieving scholars and their naturalistic human logic, but with Christ and the logic of faith.

For example, how do we know that the Textus Receptus is the true New Testament text? We know this through the logic of faith. Because the Gospel is true, the Bible which contains this Gospel was infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. And because the Bible

was infallibly inspired, it has been preserved by God's special providence. Moreover, this providential preservation was not done privately in secret holes and caves but publicly in the usage of God's Church. Hence the true New Testament text is found in the majority of the New Testament manuscripts. And this providential preservation did not cease with the invention of printing. Hence the formation of the Textus Receptus was God-guided.

And how do we know that the King James Version is a faithful translation of the true New Testament text? We know this also through the logic of faith. Since the formation of the Textus Receptus was God-guided, the translation of it was God-guided also. For as the Textus Receptus was being formed, it was also being translated. The two processes were simultaneous. Hence the early Protestant versions, such as Luther's, Tyndale's, the Geneva, and the King James, were actually varieties of the Textus Receptus. And this was necessarily so according to the principles of God's preserving providence. For the Textus Receptus had to be translated in order that the universal priesthood of believers, the rank and file, might give it their God-guided approval.

In biblical studies, in philosophy, in science, and in every other learned field we must begin with Christ and then work out our basic principles according to the logic of faith. This procedure will show us how to utilize the learning of non-Christian scholars in such a way as to profit by their instruction. Undeniably these unbelievers know a great many facts by virtue of God's common grace. They misinterpret these facts, however, because they ignore and deny God's revelation of Himself in and through the facts. Hence our task is to point out the inconsistencies and absurdities of unbelieving thought and then to take the facts which learned unbelievers have assembled and place them in their proper framework of biblical truth.

For example, if we begin with Christ, then we will understand what language is, namely, the medium by which God reveals the facts unto men and also Himself in and through the facts. And if we adopt this basic position, then the study of Greek grammar, and especially the history of it, will prove immensely profitable to us and will strengthen our faith, for then we will see how God in His providence has preserved the knowledge of Greek grammar from the days of the ancient Alexandrian grammarians down to the time of Erasmus and the Protestant Reformers and even up until now. Such a survey certainly increases our confidence in the King James translators. Judged even by modern standards, their knowledge of the biblical languages was second to none.

Begin with Christ and the Gospel and follow the logic of faith. This is the principle that must guide us in our graduate studies, especially in the biblical field. If we adhere to it, then everything we learn will fit beautifully into its place in the Christian thought-system. But if we ignore Christ and adopt a neutral approach to knowledge, we will soon lose ourselves in a wilderness of details and grow more and more chaotic in our thinking.

The King James Version Defended by Dr. Edward F. Hills is available from The Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109 (orders), www.BibleForToday.org (web site), BFT@BibleForToday.org (e-mail).

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